

Narratives

Alborough, Jez. *Watch Out! Big Bro's Coming!* Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1997. ISBN 0763601306.

Big Bro has struck terror in the minds of the jungle animals. Mouse warns that he's big and he's rough and he's tough. Peering from their hiding places, the animals decide that Mouse's big brother is no one to fear. Or is he? Bright, bold colours add to the appeal of this exuberant, bouncy story.

📖 Related Reading: *Shrinking Mouse, Is It Larger? Is It Smaller?* (perception of size)

Bang, Molly. *When Sophie Gets Angry-Really, Really Angry.* New York: The Blue Sky Press, 1999. ISBN 0590189794.

This is a great book to use when discussing feelings with a child. Sophie discovers that the best way to subdue her anger is to sit quietly in her old beech tree and let the natural world calm her. After she feels the gentle breezes of the wind, watches the water and waves and listens to the song of the bird, she feels better and "Everything's back together again."

📖 Related Reading: *A Screaming Kind of Day, Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild* (emotions)

Blake, Robert J. *Akiak: A Tale from the Iditarod.* New York: Philomel Books, 1997. ISBN 0399227989.

Interest builds with the beginning end pages which offer a map of the Iditarod route from Nome to Anchorage. The story starts with Day One, taking us through to the thrilling ending. Dog lovers will find this heroic tale emotional and those up for a challenge will thrill with the competition. Either way it is a compassionate story of courage and fortitude. The illustrations are strong, drawing the reader further into the story.

📖 Related Reading: *The Mightiest Heart, The Brave Little Parrot, Newf* (courage)

Bogart, Jo Ellen. *Jeremiah Learns to Read.* Markham, ON: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1997. ISBN 0590515276.

Jeremiah, an old man, could "do almost anything" except read. Encouraged by his family, he goes to school to learn to read and write and he, in turn, shares some of life's lessons - building and cooking and communicating with nature - with the teacher and the children. Inspired by her husband's new-found joy, Juliana, too, learns to read. The beautiful illustrations enhance the storyline, adding warmth and tenderness shared amongst young and old.

📖 Related Reading: *The Wednesday Surprise, Thank You, Mr. Falker, Amber on the Mountain, Auntie Chip and the Great Triple Creek Dam Affair, Book* (learning to read)

Booth, David. *The Dust Bowl* (illus. Karen Reczuch). Toronto: Kids Can Press, 1996. ISBN 1550747460.

This strong story of how a family survived and will once again survive the drought of the prairies instills faith and family values. The earth-tone illustrations blend with the text to give one a sense of prairie life. Love, courage, and perseverance are portrayed in a story that melds the past with the present and the future.

☞ Related Reading: *Winter Wheat (raising wheat)*; *Raising Yoder's Barn*; *The Strongest Man This Side of Cremona*; *The Mud Family (survival on a farm)*

Bourgeois, Paulette. *Big Sarah's Little Boots* Toronto: Kids Can Press Ltd., 1987. ISBN 0921103700.

Anyone who has ever loved an old sweater or pair of shoes that just would not stretch any further to accommodate a growing body, will understand the dilemma Sarah faced when she could no longer fit into her favourite boots. The bright life-like illustrations capture her dogged determination to make them bigger and her reluctant resolve to wear a new pair. The end result is both surprising and delightful for Sarah.

☞ Related Reading: *You'll Soon Grow Into Them*, *Titch*, *Peter's Chair*, *Happy Birthday, Sam!* (*growth*)

Brown, Margaret Wise. *Little Donkey Close Your Eyes* (illus. Ashley Wolff). New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1959. ISBN 0060244828.

Night has come and animals, depicted in their normal environments, settle down to the sleepy calm of the day's end. Exquisite illustrations show a young child, a playful monkey, a protective mother cat and other animals in their daily activities and also as they hear the call to rest under the moon's light. Written in rhyming text, this is a comforting book that will delight readers of all ages.

☞ Related Reading: *Big Red Barn* (author); *Snuggle, Wuggle, Time For Bed, A Time for Sleeping, Northern Lullaby* (bedtime)

Bunting, Eve. *Butterfly House* (illus. Greg Shed). New York: Scholastic Press, 1999. ISBN 0590848844.

Told in the first person, this is the tender story of a young girl and her grandpa who rescue a caterpillar from a jay. The grandpa shows her how to take care of the caterpillar until it becomes a butterfly, which they then release into the garden. Years later, the girl is the age of her grandpa, living in his house, with many butterflies visiting her garden. Although her neighbours think it is a mystery why the butterflies visit her yard, she knows the answer. At the end of this evocative tale, instructions are given for raising a butterfly.

☞ Related Reading: *Caterpillar, Caterpillar* (grandparents/butterflies); *Grandma Summer, Chestnut Dreams* (grandparents); *Gotta Go! Gotta Go!* (butterflies)

Burton, Virginia Lee. *Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939. ISBN 059032487X.

Mike Mulligan and Mary Anne, his steam shovel, are an incomparable duo that refuse to surrender to larger, more powerful, modern machines. With a proud history of building canals and highways and large buildings, Mary Anne, lovingly maintained by Mike, proves that despite her age, she is still useful and able to contribute to progress in a growing town. A young boy who believes in Mary Anne solves what seems to be an unsolvable problem and suggests a new use for her to extend her life. A valuable life lesson is presented in this book. Colourful illustrations add to the story's appeal.

☞ Related Reading: *Trucks, Trucks, Trucks, Truck, I Love Boats, Dirt Movers, Fire Truck* (machinery/vehicles)

Coerr, Eleanor. *Sadako* (illus. Ed Young). New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993. ISBN 0399217711.

Eleanor Coerr first wrote the haunting story of Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes in 1977. With Ed Young's illustrations, she rewrote the text which makes the story more accessible to younger readers. It is the tale of Sadako, a twelve-year-old Japanese girl who develops leukemia as a result of the bomb being dropped on Hiroshima. It is a sad yet heroic story which will interest children of many ages.

☞ Related Reading: *Rudi's Pond, Promises* (illness); *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (another version); *Hiroshima No Pika, Faithful Elephants* (illness/war)

Condra, Estelle. *See the Ocean* (illus. Linda Crockett-Blassingame). Nashville, Tennessee: Ideals Children's Books, 1994. ISBN 1571020055.

The word "beauty" describes this book in every sense. The language and the illustrations tell a loving story. Nellie and her family travel every year to the ocean. Her brothers usually compete to see which one will see the ocean first. This year there are surprising results as Nellie shows how well she can see with her heart.

☞ Related Reading: *A Screaming Kind of Day, Be Good to Eddie Lee, How Smudge Came, Alex Is My Friend* (disability)

Edwards, Pamela Duncan. *Barefoot: Escape on the Underground Railroad* (illus. Henry Cole). New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997. ISBN 006027137X.

The relationship between humankind and nature is manifest in this stirring tale of courage and flight. How the animals help the escaping slave become part of the Underground Railroad is unforgettable. The lush illustrations are a major part of the captivating portrayal of this tale. By tuning into the animals' helpful roles, the author makes the story meaningful to children.

☞ Related Reading: *The Wagon, Pink and Say, I Have Heard of A Land* (slavery)

Eyvindson, Peter. *Red Parka Mary* (illus. Rhian Brynjolson). Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1996. ISBN 0921827504.

Sensitively written with illustrations that capture the emotions in the story, this book tells of the heart-warming relationship that develops between a young boy and an elderly woman. Her unusual appearance has created fear in others but young “Mister” gradually comes to know her as a thoughtful, giving person. Her reciprocated Christmas gift to his red parka is far more precious than any gold or jewels.

☞ Related Reading: *Me and Mr. Mahr*, *The Christmas of the Reddle Moon* (acceptance/giving)

Fitch, Sheree. *There’s A Mouse in My House!* (illus. Leslie E. Watts). Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1997. ISBN 0385257066.

A clever mouse, confronted with imminent death, appeals to a young boy’s sympathetic nature to grant her three wishes - a glass of pop, a piece of cheese and a chance to tell her life’s story - before he terminates her with his shoe. Torn between his hysterical mother’s demands to kill the mouse and the mouse’s pathetic story, the boy makes a decision that provides the reader with an amusing ending. Fascinating illustrations add to the humour of this ridiculous tale.

☞ Related Reading: *Mouse, Look Out!*; *Tundra Mouse: A Storyknife Tale*, *Mouse Mess* (mice)

Fox, Mem. *Sleepy Bears* (illus. Kerry Argent). New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1999. ISBN 0152020160.

Snuggled warmly into their quilt-covered bed, Mother Bear lulls her six cubs who are reluctant to begin their long winter’s sleep. One by one, comforted by Mother Bear’s special rhymes, each cub yawns “a BIG yawn” and falls “faaaast asleep”. Creative artwork, featuring dreamland characters, makes this a charming quiet-time story.

☞ Related Reading: *What! Cried Granny: An Almost Bedtime Story*, *Time For Bed* (bedtime story); *Snuggle Wuggle* (language)

Franklin, Kristine L. *The Gift* (illus. Barbara Lavalley). San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1999. ISBN 081180447X.

Jimmy Joe loves to fish more than anything and he especially wants to catch a salmon. When Fish Woman, who some think to be a witch, invites him to go fishing, Jimmy Joe has no idea that he will experience the true meaning of giving. This sensitively-written story of a friendship shared by an elderly woman, a young boy and the magnificent creatures of the sea is enriched by warm, vibrant watercolours.

☞ Related Reading: *A Salmon for Simor*, *Fisherman & the Theefyspray*, *The Spirit of the Massai Man* (appreciation of living creatures)

Gilman, Phoebe. *Something from Nothing*. Richmond Hill, ON: North Winds Press, 1992. ISBN 059073802X.

When Joseph's favourite blanket has become tattered and torn, he runs to his Grandpa who can fix anything. Grandpa's scissors begin to snip and his needle flies in and out, turning it into something else useful - a jacket, a vest, a tie and, finally, a button. But when Joseph loses his button, his Grandpa is not able to make something from nothing. The warm, loving relationship that exists in this Jewish family is brought to life in Phoebe Gilman's visually delightful, detailed art. A secondary story evolves under the floorboards as mouse parents use the cuttings from Joseph's blanket to clothe their family and decorate their home.

📖 Related Reading: *Owen; from Poppa, Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs, Joseph Had A Little Overcoat* (grandparent's love)

Gregory, Nan. *How Smudge Came* (illus. Ron Lightburn). Red Deer, AB: Northern Lights Books for Children, 1995. ISBN 0889951438.

Cindy, a developmentally challenged girl, finds a puppy and sneaks it into her group home. She knows she is not allowed to have a dog and has to find a way to secretly take care of it. Cindy works in a Hospice and takes the puppy to work with her. When the puppy is discovered, it is taken to the SPCA and Cindy is heartbroken. How Cindy's dilemma is solved is a heart-warming ending to the story.

📖 Related Reading: *Dog, The Old Woman Who Named Things, A Home for Spooky, It's About Dogs* (the need for love)

Harper, Isabelle. *My Cats Nick & Nora* (illus. Barry Moser). Toronto: Scholastic Inc., 1995. ISBN 0590476351.

Pet cats, Nick and Nora, have a habit of hiding, especially on Sundays when their owner, Isabelle, and her cousin, Emmie, have other ideas. They attempt to give the cats human identities as they play school, host a birthday party for the dressed-up cats and walk them in a carriage. Sometimes things do not go according to plan. But there is always one way to get the cats to come out of hiding. Superb watercolour illustrations delightfully detail the amusing reactions of the cats.

📖 Related Reading: *My Dog Rosie, Our New Puppy* (same characters)

Hegg, Tom. *Peef The Christmas Bear* (illus. Warren Hanson). Minneapolis, Minnesota: Waldman House Press, Inc., 1995. ISBN 0931674263.

Young children will love Peef as they think of what it feels like to hug their favourite teddy bears. Peef is a special Christmas teddy bear that accompanies Santa each year as he delivers the toys on Christmas Eve. But as much as Peef loves Santa, and as much as he knows Santa loves him, Peef wants to be owned and to be loved by a child. He doesn't tell this to Santa, but Santa understands how he feels. Then one Christmas Eve night, Santa makes the sacrifice and Peef's dream comes true. This book will touch the hearts of children and adults alike.

📖 Related Reading: *A Silent Night for Peef* (sequel); *The Velveteen Rabbit, Rocking Horse Christmas* (special toys)

Henkes, Kevin. *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1996. ISBN 0688128971.

Lilly loves school and she especially loves her teacher. She will do anything to please him. But her love turns to anger when he asks her to be patient and wait for an appropriate time to show her new purple purse and its contents to the class. Her retaliation leaves her feeling really, really sorry. Lively, expressive illustrations present a true picture of an enthusiastic Lilly and her cool teacher.

☞ Related Reading: *Sammy and the Dinosaurs*, *Benny's Had Enough*, *Show and Tell Bunnies* (school events)

Hest, Amy. *When Jessie Came Across the Sea* (illus. P. J. Lynch). Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1997. ISBN 0763600946.

The depth of this story is reflected in the enthralling language and captivating illustrations. Jessie, a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl, is chosen to leave her village and travel to America, the land of opportunities. Torn apart from her grandmother, she courageously makes a new life for herself. However, she never forgets the power of love and finds the means to make several dreams come true.

☞ Related Reading: *Grandfather's Journey*, *The Keeping Quilt*, *The Memory Coat* (family memories)

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *A House Is a House for Me* (illus. Betty Fraser). New York: The Viking Press, 1978. ISBN 0670380164.

This story begs to be read again and again. Filled with fascinating illustrations and lively rhyming text, the book explores almost every kind of house imaginable. A head is a house for a secret and garbage makes houses for germs are a sampling of the dozens of houses - some familiar and some unfamiliar - that become homes for creatures and things. This book is a great jumping off point for children to create their own book of houses.

☞ Related Reading: *The House Book*, *The Little House*, *My House Has Stars* (houses)

Hoffman, Mary. *Amazing Grace* (illus. Caroline Binch). London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 1991. ISBN 0711206996.

A young girl, Grace, has a love for dramatizing stories. But one day at school when she puts up her hand to be Peter Pan, she is disheartened to hear from other classmates that she cannot be Peter Pan who was neither a girl nor was he black. It took the support of both her mother and grandmother to help Grace realize that she can be anything she wants to be. The illustrations are both beautiful and vigorous.

☞ Related Reading: *Grace & Family* (sequel); *Sister Anne's Hands* (acceptance)

Houston, Gloria. *My Great-Aunt Arizona* (illus. Susan Condie Lamb). New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992. ISBN 0064433749.

The author recounts the cycles in the life of a great-aunt and special teacher, Arizona. This book is an excellent historic fiction that portrays vivid details about the life in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina in the pioneer days.

☞ Related Reading: *Miss Rumphius, Only Opal, When I Was Young in the Mountains* (historical)

Hutchins, Pat. *Titch*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1971. ISBN 0027458806.

Loveable Titch, the youngest of three children, faces daily challenges of keeping up with his much bigger brother and sister and of having to settle for everything small. A tiny seed changes Titch's perception of small things, helping him to realize that small beginnings evolve into great endings. Brightly-coloured illustrations express the variety of feelings evident in the story.

☞ Related Reading: *Much Bigger than Martin, Titch and Daisy, You'll Soon Grow Into Them, Titch, Tidy Titch* (same character)

Innes, Fran Baird. *Mae's Night Flight* (illus. Stanimir Stoilov). St. John's, NF: Tuckamore Books, 1993. ISBN 1895382799.

A child, Mae, awakens in the night to the sound of loud thunder. She is annoyed by Thor, the Thunder God, who eventually invites her to join him in the sky to observe how the thunder and lightning is created. Mae enjoys other spectacles in her night flight - the view of Signal Hill, St. John's Harbour, and a pod of humpback whales in the ocean. Thor then carries her away to experience more wonders of the sky. The local setting adds a cultural flavour to the story.

☞ Related Reading: *In the Night Kitchen, Humphrey's Bear, Matthew's Dragon* (dreams)

Keats, Ezra Jack. *The Snowy Day*. New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1962. ISBN 0590030310.

What better time is there to be a child than on a snowy day? Peter delights in playful adventures - making tracks and snow angels and a snowman and sliding. Hoping to bring his fun indoors, he tucks a snowball into his pocket "for tomorrow". Falling asleep, disappointed that his wonderful day has ended, he awakes to find that he can again enjoy the fun of another snowy day. Colourful collage pictures, softened with watercolour accents, make this a magical story.

☞ Related Reading: *Katy and the Big Snow, Snow Day, White Snow, Bright Snow, The Snow Speaks* (snowfalls)

Laurence, Margaret. *The Olden Days Coat* (illus. Muriel Wood). Toronto: Tundra Books, 1998. ISBN 088776455X.

Creating all new illustrations, Muriel Wood has given new life to this treasured story of young Sal whose disappointment with being away from her home, her friends and her traditional Christmas turns into a magical journey into an unknown world. She finds, as she explores the contents of her Gran's old trunk, an olden days coat. Putting on the blue-hooded coat with the red wool sash, she is transported into the past. Christmas morning shared with Gran tenderly reveals the mystery of her bewildering journey.

☞ Related Reading: *Grandad's Prayers of the Earth, Grandad Bill's Song, The Memory Coat, The Canada Geese Quilt, Remember Me* (family love)

Lawson, Julie. *Midnight in the Mountains* (illus. Sheena Lott). Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers, 1998. ISBN 1551431130.

Exquisite watercolour paintings evoke memories of times and places of tranquillity. The daytime world in the mountains possesses endless pleasures - skiing and dog sledding, making snow angels and searching for tracks - that fill the air with laughing voices, and yapping huskies. But at midnight when everyone else is asleep in the cabin, a little girl sits by the window and listens to the stillness of the night time world in the mountains - the crackle of the stars, the brush of wings, the hush of falling snow. The secrets of the mountains in winter become magically real through a child's eyes.

☞ Related Reading: *Grandma Summer, I Have An Olive Tree* (appreciation)

Lewis, Kim. *Floss*. Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1992. ISBN 1564022714.

Floss, a young Border collie who loves to have fun, especially playing ball with the children, is sent far away to a sheep farm to replace an aging dog. Sheep herding is instinctive to her and she becomes a good sheep dog, leaving little time for play. Working so hard diminishes Floss's longing for fun. Will she remember how to do nose kicks, passes and springs in the air if she ever gets a chance to play ball again? Irresistible paintings add charm to this touching story that teaches young children the importance of balancing responsibilities with fun.

☞ Related Reading: *Just Like Floss* (sequel); *The Most Obedient Dog in the World, Can I Be Good?, Newf* (dog tales)

Lionni, Leo. *The Biggest House in the World*. Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1968. ISBN 0394909445.

The moral of the story is.... In this story, typical of Leo Lionni's writing, father snail teaches his son that there is a very dear price to pay in wishing for and receiving something that he would not normally possess. He tells about an ambitious snail who learned that being the biggest, the most beautiful and the most impressive does not guarantee happiness. Rich, detailed drawings show the splendour of the snail's habitat.

☞ Related Reading: *I Wish I Were A Butterfly, The Midas Touch* (wishes)

London, Jonathan. *Froggy Gets Dressed* (illus. Frank Remkiewicz). New York: Viking, 1992. ISBN 0670842494.

“Frogs are supposed to sleep all winter” not play in the snow. But this froggy’s determination to enjoy the snow eventually becomes more bother than it is worth since he has to undress and dress several times because each time he has forgotten to put something on. Hilarious illustrations combined with energetic text make this an appealing story for young children.

☞ Related Reading: *Froggy Goes to Bed*, *Froggy Plays Soccer*, *Froggy’s Halloween*, *Froggy Goes to School*, *Froggy’s First Kiss* (sequels)

MacLachlan, Patricia. *All the Places to Love*. New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1994. ISBN 0060210982.

Enriched by illustrations that are so life-like they almost appear to move on the page, this story tells of Eli who was born into a farming family, for whom the simple pleasures of life - the valley, the river, the fields, the old turtle and life itself - “make all the difference in the world”. Eli knows that no matter where life’s journey leads him, he will remain connected to the places he learned to love best.

☞ Related Reading: *Oh My Baby, Little One*; *Into My Mother’s Arms*; *I Love You Just The Way You Are*; *Cherry Pies and Lullabies* (family love)

Major, Kevin. *The House of Wooden Santas* (wood carvings Imelda George; photo. Ned Pratt). Red Deer, AB: Red Deer College Press, 1997. ISBN 0889951667.

This story of Christmas and family will entice both younger and older readers. Nine-year-old Jesse and his mother leave the city to start a new life in a small village. Jesse is upset with the uncertainties of his new life and is helped by the new Santas that his mom carves each day. The first reading of this book will engross the reader in anticipating the arrival of each new Santa. A second reading pulls one into the family conflicts and the love which triumphs in the end.

☞ Related Reading: *Littlejim’s Gift: An Appalachian Christmas Story*, *One Hundred Shining Candles* (family Christmas)

McBratney, Sam. *Guess How Much I Love You* (illus. Anita Jeram). Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1994. ISBN 1564024733.

Little Nutbrown Hare’s love for Big Nutbrown Hare reaches very high and very far but it is never quite as far or as high as Big Nutbrown Hare’s love for him. Beautifully illustrated in soft, warm colours, this comforting book captures the deep, abiding love shared between a child and a parent.

☞ Related Reading: *I Love You The Purplest*, *The Runaway Bunny*, *Mama, Do You Love Me?*, *A Mouse Told His Mother* (a parent’s love)

McCloskey, Robert. *Blueberries For Sal*. New York: The Viking Press, 1948. ISBN 014050169X.

Picking blueberries becomes an adventure in this timeless classic, as Little Bear and Little Sal's mother and Little Sal and Little Bear's mother become mixed up with each other on Blueberry Hill. When it comes to berry picking, animals and humans share similar habits, humorously described in this story. Detailed black and white illustrations add charm.

📖 Related Reading: *Where's My Teddy?* (bear mix-up); *Make Way for Ducklings* (author)

McCully, Emily Arnold. *Beautiful Warrior: The Legend of the Nun's Kung Fu*. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 1998. ISBN 0590374877.

This tale has a little something for everyone. It takes place in seventeenth century China where Wu Mei, the beautiful kung fu master, teaches a young girl the art of kung fu. The kung fu lessons illustrate the true meaning behind martial arts. It is, however, also an adventure story of good versus evil, where goodness triumphs. The watercolours are magnificent, adding to the lustre of the story.

📖 Related Reading: *Celia and the Sweet, Sweet Water*; *Brave Margaret*; *A Weave of Words*; *Rumpelstiltskin's Daughter* (courage and strength)

Polacco, Patricia. *Rechenka's Eggs*. New York: Philomel Books, 1988. ISBN 0399215018.

Babushka paints eggs for the Easter festival in Moskva. One day she finds an injured goose which she looks after and names Rechenka. When Rechenka accidentally breaks the decorated eggs that Babushka has painted, a miracle occurs to solve the problem. As their friendship grows, Babushka hates the thought of Rechenka leaving, but she knows the goose should return to the wild. A surprising miracle at the end of the story provides a beautiful solution. This tale of friendship, love and loyalty will appeal to hearts of all ages.

📖 Related Reading: *Danny's Duck*; *What Joe Saw*; *Mrs. Katz and Tush* (miracles of nature)

Ryder, Joanne. *My Father's Hands* (illus. Mark Graham). New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1994. ISBN 068809189X.

A father and his daughter explore the wonders of their garden. She watches as her father's hands plant, water and weed. Her father then holds many garden creatures within his hands which he transfers to hers. She feels the gentleness in her father's hands and trusts him to not let anything harm her. The striking oil paintings complement the warm, loving words of the text, making this a book for children to share with their fathers.

📖 Related Reading: *My Dad; The Strongest Man This Side of Cremona; Dad & Me* (fathers)

Rylant, Cynthia. *Dog Heaven*. New York: The Blue Sky Press, 1995. ISBN 0590417010.

Where do animals go when they die? Dogs go to dog heaven where there are ice-cream biscuits, clouds to sleep on and homes for all. As angel dogs, they will be there to greet old friends who show up. Sensitive written, it will reassure children who face the loss of beloved pets.

☞ Related Reading: *Cat Heaven, The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* (death of pets)

Slate, Joseph. *Who Is Coming To Our House?* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1988. ISBN 0399215379.

Mouse, the only creature who knows the identity of the unexpected visitors to the stable, maintains the mystery and helps to build suspense for the animals and for the reader. Sensing that these are important guests, the animals prepare their house to be a warm and welcoming journey's end. Beautifully-illustrated in earth tones, this story of the First Christmas will be appreciated by young children for its gentle, rhyming text and its depiction of the stable animals as sensitive, caring creatures.

☞ Related Reading: *Christmas Lullaby, The Friendly Beasts, A Dozen Silk Diapers, Wombat Divine, Song of the Camels* (animals at the First Christmas)

Smucker, Barbara. *Selina and the Bear Paw Quilt* (illus. Janet Wilson). Toronto: Lester Publishing Ltd., 1995. ISBN 1895555701.

Selina's family carries on the Mennonite tradition of peaceful co-existence with nature. Her grandmother spends her time making quilts that incorporate treasured scraps of fabric - from her own wedding dress, and from Selina's baby clothes. When the Civil War forces Selina's family to move to Upper Canada, her heart is saddened because her grandmother is too old to go. The precious gift of her grandmother's quilt becomes the bond that links them between countries. Janet Wilson's touching illustrations are bordered by many beautiful quilt patterns that record family histories, making the quilts both sentimental and useful.

☞ Related Reading: *Selina and the Shoo Fly Pie* (sequel); *The Canada Geese Quilt, The Quilt Story, Claire's Gift* (quilting/grandparents)

Spalding, Andrea. *Sarah May and the New Red Dress* (illus. Janet Wilson). Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers, 1998. ISBN 1551431173.

Sarah May needs a new dress. Her practical mother chooses strong cloth in a "very smart and sensible" blue instead of the red dress Sarah May desires. She shares her disappointment with the West Wind who, knowing what will happen, encourages her to be patient. A sudden rainstorm has a drastic and unexpected effect on Sarah May's new dress. Endearing illustrations, filled with emotion, lend a touch of joy to a story of longing and hope.

☞ Related Reading: *The Rag Coat, A New Coat for Anna* (childhood disappointment and hope)

Tafari, Nancy. *I Love You, Little One*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1998. ISBN 0590922084.

The warm, repetitive language of this book brings comfort and peace to the reader as each mother expresses her unconditional, never-ending love for her baby, comparing it to the love offered to each creature by its natural world. The watercolour and pencil artwork illuminates the tenderness shared between mother and baby.

☞ Related Reading: *I Love You As Much, Sleep, Little One, Sleep, Time For Bed* (animal parenting)

Titherington, Jeanne. *Pumpkin Pumpkin*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1986. ISBN 0688056954.

Meticulously-detailed coloured pencil illustrations coax a huge, orange pumpkin from a tiny seed. As Jamie watches his pumpkin through its various stages of growth, he enjoys many of nature's creatures who reside in the garden. At harvest time, he is rewarded with many more seeds that he can use to create new life next Spring.

☞ Related Reading: *It's Pumpkin Time, The Pumpkin Book, Pumpkin Circle* (pumpkin growth)

Trottier, Maxine. *Prairie Willow* (illus. Laura Fernandez and Rick Jacobson). Toronto: Stoddart Kids, 1998. ISBN 0773730672.

Prairie homesteading is hard work and everyone in the family helps. Young Emily is rewarded by being allowed to buy something special with the little extra money earned from the sale of their wheat. Recalling her dreams of wind whistling through trees, she chooses a weeping willow. The willow stands firm during the passage of time and connects Emily to the people she loves and the events that have shaped their lives. Breath-taking paintings bestow dignity to a lifetime to toil, joys and sorrows.

☞ Related Reading: *Waiting for the Evening Star, The Divide, Little House on the Prairie* (prairie life)

Van Allsburg, Chris. *The Polar Express*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985. ISBN 0395389496.

A magical train ride on Christmas Eve takes a young boy to the North Pole where Santa chooses him to receive the first gift of Christmas - anything he could imagine. Humbly he asks for one bell from Santa's sleigh and accepting it from Santa, he places it in the pocket of his bathrobe. Sadly, on the way home, he realizes that the bell is lost. But a greater surprise awaits him on Christmas morning. Impressive paintings give rise to the deep meaning that lies within this story. For many, the sound of Santa's sleigh bell has fallen silent. But for those "who truly believe", the bell still rings long past the innocence of youth.

☞ Related Reading: *On the Way to Christmas, The Remarkable Christmas of the Cobbler's Son* (gift from Santa)

Wallace, Ian. *Boy of the Deeps*. Toronto: Greenwood Books, 1999. ISBN 0888993560.

This is a historical fiction that is set at the turn of the 20th century in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. It is an account of a boy's first day in the mines as he begins to learn the trade and the dangers of working as a coal miner. The illustrations are authentic in depicting such things as pit ponies, cages being lowered by cable, blasting techniques and walls of coal.

☞ Related Reading: *Duncan's Way*, *The Stoneboat*, *Working Cotton*, *Wind Over Dark Tickle*, *Peppe the Lamplighter* (childhood struggles)

Wells, Rosemary. *Forest of Dreams*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1988. ISBN 0803705697.

Celebrating her gift of life, a young girl delights in nature's beauty as the season progresses from Winter to Spring. The soft, gentle, rhyming text describes for children how they are able to use their senses to appreciate the riches of our world.

☞ Related Reading: *Canoe Days*, *Brother Eagle*, *Sister Sky* (appreciation of nature)

Wildsmith, Brian. *The Owl and the Woodpecker*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. ISBN 0192796763.

When an intrusive owl moves into the part of the forest occupied by a woodpecker, disagreements erupt between the two. Since neither bird will agree to move, the forest animals decide that, despite their allegiance to either the owl or the woodpecker, the solution lies in removing owl from that part of the forest. Disregarding his dislike for the owl, the woodpecker warns him of an impending disaster and saves his life. The grateful owl and the woodpecker help each other to regain peace in the forest. Bold illustrations contribute to the mood and the appeal of this story.

☞ Related Reading: *The Donkey and the Rock*, *Farmer Duck*, *Six Crows* (controversy); *Owl Babies*, *Owl Lake* (owls)

Wojciechowski, Susan. *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey* (illus. P.J. Lynch). Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1995. ISBN 1564023206.

In this powerful and moving tale, Jonathan Toomey, a skilled woodcarver, deeply saddened by the death of his wife and young son, resigns himself to a reclusive life with no joy. Widow McDowell and her young son, Thomas, need a new crèche to replace a lost, treasured one and Jonathan Toomey glumly agrees to do the carvings. Reluctantly and with stern insistence that there be no interruptions, he allows Thomas to watch him as he works. A miracle occurs as Thomas and his mother help Jonathan Toomey to laugh again. P.J. Lynch's magnificent illustrations add poignancy to this special Christmas story.

☞ Related Reading: *Welcome Comfort*, *The Worker in Sandalwood*, *Jacob's Gift* (compassion)

Yashima, Taro. *Crow Boy*. New York: Viking Press, 1983. ISBN 067024319.

This is a well-loved tale, being named a Caldecott Honor Book in 1956. It is a story about Chilú who had been an outcast while attending a village school. However, in his sixth and final year, a true teacher, Mr. Isuhe, arrives and sees special things in the boy that no one else ever noticed. This new acceptance helps the child to blossom into a proud young man.

☞ Related Reading: *Maple Moon*, *Thank You, Mr. Falker*, *Big Al* (acceptance)

Zolotow, Charlotte. *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present* (illus. Maurice Sendak). New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962. ISBN 0064430200.

Warmly-hued illustrations charmingly portray the patient, supportive rabbit as he helps a thoughtful little girl find just the right birthday present for her mother. Colours play an important role in the rabbit's many and often humorous suggestions. A pattern evolves as choices are made to include in a lovely present.

☞ Related Reading: *A Gift for Mama*, *A Chair for My Mother*, *Chicken Sunday*, *Farmer Joe Goes To The City* (gifts)

Zolotow, Charlotte. *My Friend John* (illus. Amanda Harvey). New York: Random House Children's Books, 2000. ISBN 0385326513.

This story, told in the first person, is about a boy and his best friend, John. They share a bond that allows them to like everything important about each other. They know each other's strengths, needs and secrets. Theirs is the friendship that all children would like to have. The soft watercolours in this book complement the special friendship. The boys also serve as good role models because they are seen in many activities that are not aggressive.

☞ Related Reading: *Will You Be My Friend?*, *My Best Friend*, *Alex Is My Friend*, *Ira Sleeps Over*, *Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse*, *Just You and Me* (friendship)